

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, PINR, UNGA, BY

SUBJ: SECVISIT: 31ST UNGA, BURUNDI DELEGATION

REF : (A) STATE 180074, (B) BUJUMBURA 811,

(C) BUJUMBURA 769

1. FOREIGN MINISTER MELCHIOR BWAKIRA DEPARTED SEPTEMBER 27, FOR UNGA AND WILL ARRIVE AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 28 FOR APPROXIMATELY THREE WEEK STAY IN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON, WITH HIM IN BURUNDI DELEGATION ARE ANTOINE NDUWAYO, COUNSELLOR TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (NDUWAYO IS NEW TO THE MINISTER'S CABINET; HE HAS PREVIOUSLY SERVED IN MOSCOW AND RECENTLY COMPLETED ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL STUDIES IN GERMANY); ALOYS NDEZAKO, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF GEOLOGY AND MINES IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMY; JONATHAS NIYUNGEKO, DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL, PRESS AND INFORMATION AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS; BNRAVENTURE MASABO, DIRECTOR OF PROTOEBL IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY (HE IS ANOTHER NEW ARRIVAL TO THE MINISTRY HAVING SERVED MOST RECENTLY IN CAIRO; HE IS EXCEPTIONALLY OUTGOING AND FRIENDLY); JOSEPH NTAKABANYURA, DIREGTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY (FORMER BURUNDI AMBASSADOR TO PARIS WHO IS ALSO FRIENDLY AND APPROACHABLE); JOSEPH GAFURERA. DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURAL PLANNING IN THE AGRICULTURE MINISTRY; ALPHONSE

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BARANCIRA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE FOREIGN

MINISTRY (HE IS BRAND NEW TO POSITION; EMBASSY HAS NO BIO INFORMATION ON HIM).

2. REF B. NOTED THAT BWAKIRA'S REQUEST TO HAVE MEETING WITH SECRETARY WOULD PROBABLY RUN INTO LIMITATIONS OF SECRETARY'S TIGHT SCHEDULE. FROM LONG OBSERVATION OF SIDE TALK PROBLEMS AT THE ANNUAL UNGA, I KNOW THE REAL HEADACHE THAT SUCH ENCOUNTERS POSE. NEVERTHELESS, I WOULD URGE THAT A SERIOUS EFFORT BE MADE THIS YEAR TO SQUEEZE BWAKIRA IN FOR A HALF HOUR EITHER IN NEW YORK OR WASHINGTON.

3. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY SECRETARY HAS MET WITH A COUNTERPART FROM BURUNDI FOR AT LEAST TEN YEARS, BUT, AT ANY RATE, THERE HAS SURELY BEEN NO DIALOGUE RECENTLY IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE WIDE-SPREAD TROUBLES HERE UNTIL FOUR YEARS AGO. WHILE BURUNDI DOES NOT MATTER MUCH TO THE UNITED STATES, ITS RELATIONS WITH US COULD BE QUIETLY APPROACHING A TURNING POINT. A NEW AND POTENTIALLY VERY FRIENDLY AMBASSADOR HAS JUST ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON; THERE ARE SOME SLIGHT SIGNS OF BURUNDI'S MODIFICATION OF ITS PAST BLATANT ANTI-AMERICANISM IN INTERNATIONAL GATHERINGS; EXCHANGES OF VIEWS WITH TOP-LEVEL BURUNDIAN OFFICIALS IN BUJUMBURA HAVE MULTIPLIED DRASTICALLY SINCE 1975 AND SEEM TO BE MUCH REDUCING TRADITIONAL BURUNDIAN SUSPICIONS OF THE UNITED STATES; SIGNIFICANT AMERICAN BILATERAL AID IS ABOUT TO START FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND OTHER SECTORS OF OPERATIONAL CONTACT ARE ALSO EXPANDING.

4. A SHORT CONVERSATION BETWEEN BWAKIRA AND THE SECRETARY COULD GIVE A MAJOR BOOST TO THESE TRENDS, NOT SO MUCH IN PROBING SPECIFICS (WHICH SHOULD HARDLY BE THE SECRETARY'S WORRY), BUT, PREDOMINANTLY, IN REAFFIRMING THE GENERALITIES OF AMERICA'S CONCERN FOR THE POOREST AND LEAST IMPORTANT, AS WELL AS FOR THE RICH AND POWERFUL. BWAKIRA HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT GISCARD AND MANY EUROPEAN AND OTHER FOREIGN MINISTERS, BUT HE AND PRESIDENT MICOMBERO STILL FEEL THAT THE U.S. HAS NOT GRANTED THEM THE DIGNITY OF FORMAL EQUALITY. INDEED, THEY HAVE NOTED THE SECRETARY'S VISITS TO NEARBY ZAIRE, TANZANIA, AND KENYA WITHOUT ANY NOD TO BURUNDI, AND HAVE REMINDED US THAT NOT EVEN AN AF ASSISTANT SECRETARY HAS BEEN HERE SINCE THE EARLY SIXTIES. AN INTERVIEW WITH THE SECRETARY COULD CHANGE ALL THAT AND HAVE A LASTING EFFECT FOR SOME YEARS.

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5. AT ANY SUCH ENCOUNTER, BWAKIRA WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE INTERESTED IN THE SECRETARY'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE EVOLUTION OF EVENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, BUT I SUSPECT THAT HE WOULD HIMSELF FOCUS A BIT MORE ON NORTH-SOUTH ECONOMIC ISSUES AND ON BURUNDI'S NEED FOR LARGE DEVELOPMENTAL HELP. IT WOULD HELP OUR DIALOGUE IN BUJUMBURA IF THE SECRETARY, WHILE STRESSING OUR SYMPATHY FOR BURUNDI'S POVERTY AND THE RELEVANCE TO BURUNDI OF OUR

GROWING INVOLVEMENT IN ECONOMIC AID TO AFRICA (INCLUDING BURUNDI),
ALSO NOTED THE TWO-WAY CHARACTER OF ALL INTERNATIONAL DEALINGS
AND, SPECIFICALLY, THE IMPORTANCE OF RECIPROCAL BURUNDI UNDER-
STANDING ON POLITICAL QUESTIONS OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE
UNITED STATES, AT THE UNITED NATIONS AND ELSEWHERE.
MARK

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